

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Final Office Action of August 5, 2003, in which the Examiner rejected the claims over Alexander '253 in view of Sinclair '902. According to the Examiner, Alexander discloses a hull shape in which a wetted surface area has an aspect ratio of roughly 2.5, as allegedly shown in Figs. 14-17.

Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the opportunity afforded to discuss the Office Action during a telephone discussion conducted on December 10, 2003. While there was no agreement reached with the Examiner, certain aspects of the invention and the reference were discussed and clarified.

Applicant does not agree that Alexander discloses the claimed aspect ratios. There is no indication in Alexander that the drawings are to scale. Applicant has endeavored to make calculations of the aspect ratios based upon rough measurements taken from the drawings. Being most generous to the Examiner's position, only Fig. 16 of Alexander has an aspect ratio, which as its highest value barely reaches the low end of the claimed range.

It is submitted that the aspect ratio allegedly disclosed by Alexander as asserted by the Examiner is purely accidental and it is only the most generous interpretation of the illustrations in Alexander (which are not stated to as being to scale) that the aspect ratio in Alexander ends where the aspect ratio in the invention begins.

Applicant does not believe that the invention can be discerned from Alexander by inspection of the drawings, particularly where there is no discussion in the reference of the feature upon which the Examiner relies.

Nevertheless, in order to move the prosecution forward, Applicant has amended the claims in order to recite that the shape of the wetted area at liftoff speed is in the form of a delta and the shape of the wetted area at design speed resembles a rectangle. This aspect of the invention is best illustrated in Fig. 7, which shows area (A1) in a form of a rectangle at design speed (see page 10, lines 32-36). The wetted area (A2) at liftoff speed is in the form of a delta as illustrated. These operational features are not shown or suggested in any of the other references cited by the Examiner. In the references, the shape of the wetted area does not change, but presumably becomes smaller at higher speed.

It is therefore respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider his rejection of the claims, the allowance of which is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,


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